

Traumatic Events II:Unstable Elements

by Forlay

Category: Animorphs

Genre: Drama

Language: English

Status: In-Progress

Published: 1999-12-19 09:00:00

Updated: 1999-12-19 09:00:00

Packaged: 2016-04-27 12:05:43

Rating: K+

Chapters: 1

Words: 2,460

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: The group's first meeting of group therapy

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The woman twisted her wedding ring around her finger anxiously. Where was her husband? He was supposed to be home by now. They had the therapy meeting to attend. She knew therapy night wasn't his favorite part of the month, but she also knew he wouldn't skip it. It was too important to him, to all of them. If he skipped a meeting without due cause, the entire group would be thrown off, and according to the doctor, a new member was supposed to be joining the group tonight. He wouldn't want to miss that. He'd promised her that last night when the doctor had called to tell them about their new group member.

> She was all set to leave, she wouldn't miss the meeting, when she heard the back door open. "It took you long enough," she said to him when he leaned down to give her a kiss.

> "Sorry," he apologized. "Got caught in traffic."

> "Come on, we're going to be late."

They didn't live far from the community center, which was where their meeting was held. The doctor liked to have his meetings in comfortable, neutral places, where the attendees didn't feel like they were being kept under a microscope for observation. And it helped a lot. The first meeting had been at the doctor's office, and that had just been an awful meeting. About a dozen words were said that night. That's when the doctor chose to move the meeting place.

The meetings had been extremely successful then.

> When the young couple reached the community center, the lot was empty except for two cars. One they recognized as being the doctor's, the other must have been the new members.

> "I guess we're not late," the man said to his wife. She nodded in agreement and together they walked into the building.

> From the classroom where their meetings were held, the couple could hear voices. One was the deep, masculine voice recognized right away as the doctor's, the other a higher, but serious, feminine voice. So the new member was a woman, at least the group would be slightly more even: four guys, two women. Where was that arrangement familiar from? The woman wondered to herself.

> "Hello," the woman said as she and her husband entered the room. She hung up her coat and purse on a hanger, then went over to the new woman. She was tall, blond hair, blue eyes...familiar from somewhere...why couldn't she remember?! "I'm Cassie."

> The other woman looked at Cassie, something flickered through her eyes. Recognition perhaps? "Cassie, don't you recognize me?"

> Cassie shook her head. "No, I'm sorry...you do look familiar to me, but I don't remember where."

> "I'm Rachel. Don't you remember me?" Rachel was concerned. How could Cassie forget her best friend, her maid of honor?

> "Rachel! Long time no see!"

> Rachel looked up to see her cousin, Jake, standing protectively next to Cassie. "Hi, Jake."

> Cassie looked from her husband to the new woman. "Jake, how do you...we know her?"

> Jake took his wife by the shoulders gently. "She used to be your best friend, Cassie. She was with us..."

> "Don't say it, Jake," Cassie warned.

> "Okay, but she was there. And she was your maid of honor in our wedding?"

> Cassie felt tears of frustration begin to sting the back of her eyes. She knew why parts of her life were blocked out, some stupid defense mechanism, but why had she blocked out an entire person?

> Jake noticed the familiar signs of Cassie nearly reaching her breaking point. There was only so much she could handle now. "We'll be back in a moment, Rachel, Doctor," he said, and ushered Cassie out of the room quickly.

> "What's wrong with Cassie?" Rachel asked Doctor Greenway.

> "She's suffering from selective amnesia, I'm afraid," Doctor Greenway said gently. "It's a personal defense mechanism. She couldn't cope with many things that happened, so she blocked them out."

> "But why me?"

> "I can't answer that, Rachel. The mind works in mysterious ways."

> "Hey, hey, hey, Doctor Greenway! The fun has arrived!" A man said as he swaggered into the room. But he stopped dead in his tracks when he saw Rachel. "You. What are you doing here?"

> Rachel smirked slightly. "And it's nice to see you, too, Marco."

> "Why are you here? We all thought..."

> "That I was immune? Not in the least."

> "I suppose you're the reason Cassie's out in the hall nearly hysterical?"
> "Why am I getting the third degree?"
> "I just wanted to know," Marco said, sitting down across from her. "I'm sorry. I shouldn't have started accusing you like that. It's just...well, I don't understand it myself."
> "Do any of us understand why we're here?"
> Both Rachel and Marco looked up to see the newcomer to the room. He was tall, with tousled dark blond hair and piercing hazel eyes. Eyes that never changed from their raptor-like glare.

> Rachel literally felt her heart skip a beat before it restarted, beating twice as frantically as ever. It was all she could do to keep her voice semi-steady as she greeted him. "Hello, Tobias."

> He walked into the room, guardedly. He sat down next to Rachel, but stayed as far away from her as he could while still being in his chair. "Hello, Rachel," he said flatly. Rachel was about to say more to him, but Cassie and Jake came back in, his arm protectively around her shoulder. Doctor Greenway nodded to them in greeting and indicated they could sit down.

> "I'd like to welcome you all to tonight's meeting," he said warmly. "As I'm sure you know, we have a new member, and you all apparently know eachother already. However, it's standard procedure for a new member to introduce herself, and tell us a bit about her, and why she's here." He nodded to Rachel, "It's all you."

> Rachel looked down for a moment, and unconsciously smoothed her slacks. Dammit, Rachel, she told herself, you have to stop doing that! "Uh. I guess I'm here 'cause I'm OCD and PTSD." She said the last part in a rush, like she didn't like to admit that, which was true. She still saw her disorders as weaknesses that could possibly have been prevented.

> "I don't think we all caught that," Doctor Greenway told her. "I know it's not something you like to admit, Rachel. But we're all extremely supportive here, right?" he said that last part to the rest of the group, who all nodded.

> "Okay, fine," Rachel sighed. "I'm OCD and PTSD."

> "Both?" Tobias asked. Rachel just nodded. "I'm...I'm sorry."

> Rachel shrugged. "It's not like you could have done anything to stop it. And I guess it's not my fault either."

> "It's not, Rachel," Marco said emphatically. "Trust me. For once I'm being serious here. I've been there, I've got PTSD, too."

> "As do I," Tobias admitted quietly.

> There was an awkward silence before anyone else spoke. "I'm...I've got selective amnesia," Cassie finally admitted. "My mind just sort of...blocked...out entire parts of my life." She looked pleadingly at Rachel. "That's why I didn't recognize you. I'm sorry, Rachel, but I honestly don't have any memories of you. A few vague ones from my wedding, but otherwise, nothing. I feel so awful...I've never blocked off an entire person before. And I don't even understand why!"

> "None of us understand why, Cassie," Jake told her reassuringly. "Not just you. We were some of the strongest kids on Earth, yet when we hit adulthood, that need to be strong all melted away."

> "Are you going to tell us why you're here, Jake?" Doctor

Greenway asked.

> Jake looked down sheepishly, like he was embarrassed. "My problem's nothing, really."

> Cassie put a hand on her husband's knee, "Jake, it's not 'nothing', and you know it."

> Jake sighed. "I have depression. Plain, simple, every day depression."

> "Not plain, simple, every day depression, Jake," Doctor Greenway corrected. "Yours is different. Most depressions don't require therapy, simply medication. However, all of you had similar experiences during the invasion, correct?" There were nods around the room, although all were very slight, "I thought it would be best for all of you to be able to get together to discuss it. If possible," he added to Rachel and Cassie. "Rachel, it's customary for everyone to share something positive that happened during the past week. Whether it was overcoming an obstacle of some kind, or just a positive event. Marco, why don't you start, Rachel can finish if she'd feel comfortable doing so."

> Marco nodded. "I went the entire week without being paranoid. Until tonight, anyway," he added, looking away from Rachel.

> "What do you think brought it on tonight?" the doctor pressed.

> "I think it was seeing Rachel again. I'm sorry, Rachel, I...I couldn't help it. You just suddenly reappeared and Cassie was outside...I didn't mean to, honest."

> "I--I'm sure you didn't." Rachel started to smooth out her slacks again.

> "You still did well, Marco," Cassie assured him. "It's the longest you've gone before."

> "Yeah, it is...but it's still stupid that I blew that tonight."

> "Marco, it's really not your fault," Rachel said. "You couldn't help it, just like I can't stop this damn obsession with getting the wrinkles out of my slacks." As if to emphasize her point, she smoothed them again.

> Doctor Greenway looked to Jake. "Would you go next?"

> "Um...well, I managed to go all day yesterday without thinking I was a worthless human being."

> "Hey, that's great!" Marco told his best friend. The others all agreed with him, congratulating Jake. All of them had had bouts of depression and knew how hard it was to over come it, although none had it as bad as he did.

> "Cassie?" Doctor Greenway prompted when the congratulations for Jake were finished.

> "Well...I remembered something this week," she said quietly. "It...it wasn't all that plesant...it was...that first night. When we met..." she sighed, "I don't even remember his name. Ax's brother?"

> "Elfangor," Rachel supplied quietly. She didn't like to remember, either, but she had the memories. They were there to stay, whether she liked it or not.

> Cassie's lighted up and she nodded. "Yes! Elfangor! Elfangor-Sirinal-Shamtul." She looked extremely proud of herself, like a kindergartner who'd gotten the gold star for citizenship.

> "What did you remember?" the doctor asked.

> "The four...five of us, I guess," she corrected with a glance at Rachel, "We were walking home from the mall, and decided to cut

through the construction site. On the way through, Tobias saw Elfangor's crash. And we were given the morphing power."

> Tobias nodded. "Yeah, that's what happened, Cassie."

> "The details are sketchy, I can't tell you anything more. But I'm getting better, right?"

> "Right, Cassie," Jake said reassuringly.

> The group's attention turned to Tobias. "I'd rather not talk about this week," he muttered.

> "Any particular reason why?" Doctor Greenway asked gently.

> "I just don't," Tobias snapped. "It's a choice whether to talk or not, isn't it?"

> "Of course it is, Tobias," the doctor told him, then he turned to Rachel, "Would you like to tell us anything?"

> "Something positive? Nothing positive happened this week. I started my medication so I feel like crap, and I haven't seen the slightest change in the damn OCD!" She looked down, embarrassed, and once again smoothed her slacks. "I'm sorry, it's the medication. It hasn't exactly made me a happy-go-lucky person this week."

> "That's all right, Rachel," Doctor Greenway assured her. "Unless somebody would like to say something else, why don't we call it a night and we'll meet again next week?"

> The members of the therapy group nodded their assent silently and without a word gathered their things and left. As he usually did, the doctor stayed after for awhile, finishing his notes on what had happened at the meeting. Perhaps it hadn't been such a good idea to reunite the group without some warning. The four original members knew each other fine but the addition of the fifth was an unstable element that needed to be stabilized before the entire group fell apart.

A/N: We certainly have a cheery group! Will they be able to stay together, or will having to face each other again simply drive them farther apart? Find out eventually in Traumatic Events III!!! (Sorry, I'm drinking a can of pop [don't give me that look, I'm from Michigan! What else should I call it? Soda? Uh-uh!] with lots of caffeine in it and it's making me say weird things)_

End
file.